



## **2009 MG Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition**

*Program Category Nomination for the*

## **Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach**

31 January 2010

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## **Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach**

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Department of the Army Community Relations Awards Program of Excellence

**Program Category**  
**Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach**  
**Introduction**

Nominee: The Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach

Ohio National Guard Public Affairs: Office of Community Outreach

Ohio's Adjutant General, Major General L. Wayt, explored innovative ways to align outreach activities to organizational priorities for about three years. His intent was to maintain positive relationships with employers who hire Guard members and to cultivate sustainable partnerships with other important external stakeholders who also influence readiness.

Ohio did extensive research and planning to devise potential outreach methods. Ohio Employer Support of Guard and Reserve data, Ohio's political climate, and input from our members and external stakeholders shaped the outcomes. The Adjutant General also initiated new organizational structures such as an Employer Outreach Quality Improvement Board and an Outreach Task Force to determine courses of action and build organizational buy-in. In March 2009, this research culminated in the establishment of the Office of Community Outreach.

Early on, Outreach refined its short-term Outreach goals because of the heavy mobilization schedules, a resource constrained environment and the involvement of other offices conducting outreach. Employers, educators, women, minorities, and alumni were prioritized as the key communities for Outreach to target. In nine short months, Outreach sponsored 32 events that were attended by 474 key community members.

Employer events were the focus. Employers participated in quarterly joint employer, Army annual training, call to duty, welcome home ceremony and the 30-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events. In addition, 235 Patriotic Ohio National Guard Employer certificates were distributed midway during Soldier deployments.

Five orientation flights and the mailing of 1,600 educational postcards supported the cultivation of other key communities.

Outreach programming supports many objectives simultaneously. They significantly contribute to the Adjutant General's (TAG) priorities as well as the Army's community relations outreach objectives. Outreach activities support TAG priorities of readiness, training, well-being, strength, diversity, communications, defense to civil authorities/homeland defense, and transformation/emerging missions. They also inspire patriotism, foster good community relations, increase public awareness, maintain the Army's respected reputation and support recruiting.

All short-term goals were realized during this early phase of program development. These initial successes shape our optimism about also meeting long-term Outreach goals.



Department of the Army Community Relations Awards Program of Excellence

**Program Category**  
**Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach**  
**Research Phase**

Nominee: The Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach

Ohio National Guard Public Affairs: Office of Community Outreach

Many forces drove the need to establish the Office of Community Outreach. Its purpose is to cultivate and sustain mutually beneficial relationships with the community and to streamline outreach synergy and efficiency across the organization in a proactive manner.

Deliberate organizational research and planning began in 2006 when the need for Outreach came into focus.

Up to that point, the Adjutant General consistently shared the strategic message that readiness of the Ohio National Guard (ONG) was dependent upon successful balancing of the “three-legged-stool:” Servicemember, Family and Employer. This new reality was also reflected in the organization’s mission statement: “To prepare and deploy ready units to accomplish federal, state and community missions in partnership with Families and Employers.”

To that end, significant resources were committed to creating a world-class Family Readiness Program to meet the needs of Servicemembers and their Families. Today, Ohio’s Family Readiness Program is the finest in the country.

Ohio has the fifth largest reserve component population in the country. Of the 27,540 reservists in Ohio in 2006, 57% of them were serving in the ONG and worked for more than 4,000 Ohio employers. More than 18,000 Ohio National Guard members have deployed since 9/11 and 200 Ohio Army National Guard members have deployed a total of three or more years.

Because of the protracted war, there was growing concern about the impact of multiple deployments on Ohio employers who hire reserve component members. Defense Secretary Robert Gates introduced a new reserve component mobilization policy in

January 2007 that has increased the likelihood of multiple deployments, at least for members of the Army National Guard.

The November 2006 Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) report, *Profiles of Reservists and Employers from the Civilian Employment Information File*, summarized that 65% of reservists nationwide were employed full-time by civilian employers, 62% worked in the private and nonprofit sectors, and the typical employer of reservists had fewer than 100 employees. The Civilian Employment Information (CEI) database, initiated in 2002, provided the first usable national profile of reserve component employers.

The IDA report fueled Ohio's concerns about ongoing employer support because so few Americans have been exposed to or participated in military service and small business is the backbone of Ohio's economy. We feared the long-term resiliency of Guard member-employer relationships.

Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) was the only organization championing the needs of reserve component employers. Employer inquiries were growing as they became more aware of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). In FY 2008 and 2009, ESGR ombudsmen responded to 75 ONG cases, averaging a resolution rate of 82%. Case examples included issues about insurance re-enrollment, denial of promotion and opportunities, and termination for cause.

Former ESGR state chair, Colonel (Ret) Bob Labadie summarized, "Although employers are largely very supportive of the Guard and Reserve, they are unaware of some of the protections Servicemembers bring into the workplace. Once these issues surface, however, employers are quick to make adjustments."

As of August 2009, ESGR reported no evidence of employer complaint trends. Instead, as the awareness of the ESGR complaint process grew, ESGR saw greater inquiry and complaint activity from Servicemembers.

Although ESGR provides valuable ombudsman services and recognition programs, they are less able to cultivate sustainable relationships with employers of ONG members. This primarily volunteer organization is limited in its capacity and resources.

At the same time, the ONG wanted to assume more responsibility for fostering and maintaining supportive relationships with their more than 4,000 employers. By embracing this responsibility, the ONG will be better positioned to positively influence organizational readiness and Soldier/Airman retention.

In spring 2006, the Adjutant General created a General Officer-led Employer Outreach Quality Improvement Board (QIB) to explore effective employer outreach methods. Only senior or field grade officers at Joint Force Headquarters and ESGR leaders participated in this QIB. The purpose of this board was to create Army and Air Guard outreach to employers, with a distinct "Guard" emphasis, independently of, yet in conjunction with, ESGR.

The QIB's goals for employer outreach were:

1. Educate employers about the Ohio National Guard.
2. Create a supportive relationship between employers, Guard members, and the Guard.
3. Resource the Employer Outreach program.

This QIB met and published quarterly newsletters to Army and Air commanders raising awareness about the need to cultivate meaningful employer relationships proactively.

A temporary employee was hired in 2008, and four unique quarterly joint employer events were implemented throughout the state. An employer readiness policy also was created. Metrics were identified attempting to ascertain how active units were in managing their members' employer relationships. Metrics also measured ESGR Patriot Award nominations, appointments of unit ESGR representatives and their attendance at regional meetings, annual Commander ESGR briefings, and maintaining currency of the CEI database.

A new Governor was elected in November 2006. Governor Ted Strickland quickly engaged with the ONG and in coordination with the Adjutant General devised organizational performance goals based upon the current threats and opportunities.

Outreach was tasked to support Goal 6: "Continue to develop Family Readiness Programs for all services and veterans, and employer support programs that are responsive to their needs 100% of the time."

Sample methods in the Adjutant General's performance appraisal included:

1. Maintain and strengthen relationships with partner agencies to provide full-spectrum physical, mental, and emotional support to Families and Employers during the complete Servicemember deployment cycle.
2. Sponsor quarterly employer outreach events to strengthen military-employer relations and to encourage hiring of veterans and military members.
3. Implement a web-based forum to link Ohio veterans with employment opportunities and to attract veterans to Ohio.
4. Seek opportunities with the National Guard Bureau to increase resources.

Outreach efforts also support Goal 2: "By 2012, recruit and sustain the force at 100 percent assigned strength and achieve a diversity factor of 15% female and 15% minorities."

One year later, the Adjutant General convened the ONG Community Outreach Task Force. He brought together the Army and Air community relations practitioners from throughout the state. His intent was to synchronize outreach activities, coordinate and align efforts across the organization, deliver consistent messages to customers, implement follow-up techniques to build sustainable relationships and to produce guiding documentation using the strategic planning process.

In 10 months, the task force developed a vision, mission, values, critical success factors, and an action plan. Categories of external key communities to influence were also identified based upon their ability to impact the readiness of the Ohio National Guard.

Task force conclusions were:

*Vision:* Every citizen an Ohio National Guard Champion

*Mission:* To ensure ready units by cultivating and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships in our communities.

*Values:*

1. Commitment: Steadfast resolve to make enduring relationships work.
2. Integrity: Doing and saying the right things for the right reasons.
3. Partnership: The enrichment of one leads to the enrichment of the other.

*Goals and action steps:*

1. Identify, capture and keep communities
  - a. Identify key communities
  - b. Develop/cultivate new key communities as appropriate
  - c. Develop joint communication program
  - d. Develop joint community outreach events program
  - e. Sustain vital key community relationships
2. Establish and obtain community outreach resource requirements
  - a. Create a community outreach advisory committee to include external stakeholders
  - b. Develop a community outreach organizational framework
  - c. Identify and meet resource shortfalls
3. Synergize efforts
  - a. Facilitate cross-talk
  - b. Deploy the community outreach plan

*Key communities:*

Employers, Educators, Youth, Females, Minorities, Government Officials, Charitable Service and/or Cause-based organizations, Community Service providers, Veterans (Guard Retirees and Veteran service organization) and Media

In March 2009, a permanent employee was selected as the Director of Community Outreach. At that time, the office moved from Personnel to Public Affairs and became part of the Adjutant General's special staff. A full-time contract employee was also hired to create the alumni affairs program.

The first step was to clarify and prioritize Outreach short-term goals. Current long-term goals were also crafted. In its first nine months, Outreach met all of its short-term goals and is optimistic about meeting its long-term goals. In addition, each of these goals and the resulting activities, promote one or more of Army's community relations outreach objectives.





Department of the Army Community Relations Awards Program of Excellence

**Program Category**  
**Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach**  
**Implementation Phase**

Nominee: The Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach

Ohio National Guard Public Affairs: Office of Community Outreach

The Office of Community Outreach was staffed with four personnel in 2009. They were the Director, Employer Outreach Coordinator, Alumni Affairs Coordinator, and the Community Outreach Assistant. Three members are Air National Guard personnel. The contracted employee is a retired Ohio Army National Guard Colonel. During the previous year, two other Army officers had worked in separate departments initiating several Outreach projects.

Past organizational perspectives were evaluated, reconciled and prioritized to obtain *short-term goals and objectives*. They were:

1. Establish the community outreach office and the associated internal work processes.
  - a. Select, assign and train staff. Meet their personnel requirements.
  - b. Allocate office space, supplies, and computer assets.
  - c. Within the first four months, create internal administrative processes to streamline event execution.
  - d. Identify and obtain financial resources.
  - e. Implement an Outreach event calendar and contacts database.
  - f. Design and initiate a strategic communication plan.
2. Educate employers about the ONG, recognize those that are supportive, and build awareness about how to find ONG military members to hire.
  - a. Conduct four joint employer events, two Army annual training employer “hands-on” events and support other employer focused events.
  - b. Distribute educational information and certificates of recognition to employers at each event.
  - c. Distribute Patriotic Ohio National Guard Employer certificates during Soldier deployments.

- d. Invite employers to call to duty, welcome home ceremonies and 30-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events.
  - e. Strengthen Adjutant General and other Command Group relationships with employers at events.
  - f. Encourage nomination of and track submission of 10% of unit member employers for ESGR Patriot Awards.
  - g. Collaborate with Ohio ESGR to incorporate them into the employer outreach events and continue to share information.
  - h. Promote the use of job search websites that promote the hiring of military.
- 3. Re-connect alumni to the ONG and create ways for them to demonstrate their support.
  - a. Develop, update and maintain a database of alumni.
  - b. Create and distribute the alumni affairs newsletter bi-weekly.
  - c. Serve as a liaison between the ONG and veterans/alumni organization groups.
  - d. Execute the Adjutant General's first-ever organization-wide Alumni Reunion.
  - e. Create ways for alumni to demonstrate their support of the ONG.
- 4. Prioritize key communities to target and streamline organizational outreach activities.
  - a. Identify priority key communities and select Ambassadors from each.
  - b. Produce and distribute educational literature at events.
  - c. Collaborate with diversity to build the success of the women's and diversity orientation flights.
  - d. Continue the educator orientation flight for Army and Air Recruiter centers of influence.
  - e. Continue the annual media flight in collaboration with State Public Affairs.
- 5. Implement methods to build support for Family Readiness.
  - a. Learn about Family Readiness programming.
  - b. Collaborate on ways to strengthen community support of their programs and implement.
- 6. Initiate a process to build trusted relationships with internal stakeholders.
  - a. Implement a reoccurring committee to facilitate cross-talk and synergy among the headquarter offices that conduct outreach activities.
  - b. Implement a reoccurring committee to build a joint mindset about outreach, capture contacts, and build event synergy with the military community relations practitioners in the field.
- 7. Initiate association outreach to cultivate partnerships and expand services.
  - a. Identify organizational priority needs and meet with associations that can assist.

- b. Explore and implement partnership strategies.

*The long-term goals were:*

1. Retain supportive employers and their Soldiers and Airmen.
2. Build sustainable mutually beneficial relationships with key community members.
3. Advance a proactive joint and synergistic organizational outreach paradigm shift that promotes the common good.

**Short term goals:**

***Goal 1: Establish the Community Outreach Office and the associated internal work processes.***

Getting the new office set up required a substantial investment of time and energy for several directorates. Position descriptions and funding were found for two Army technicians, one contractor, and one temporary technician. About \$240,000 was allocated to cover salaries. The personnel process was, in itself, very complex due to the various funding streams and differing personnel systems. In addition, no military slots were associated with these positions and three Air Force members became Army technicians.

Because most community relations activities could also be considered outreach, State Public Affairs and Outreach clarified early on who was responsible for which community relations activities. We decided to keep the large community events supported by the ONG within public affairs. Outreach was to focus on building relationships with employers and other key community members.

The Outreach team modified several administrative processes already put in place, and quickly designed others. Under the guidance of the Director, they laid the administrative foundation for four annual joint employer events, five orientation flights, call to duty, welcome home and 30-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events.

Administrative processes created within the first four months with stakeholder input included event and process management timelines and checklists, Adjutant General event letters of invitation, standardized template e-mails, post-event employer correspondence, employer data collection sheets and consistent educational handouts. Contact spreadsheets and the tracking/reporting of guest event attendance also were organized.

Outreach wanted to streamline administrative processes quickly to maximize event execution efficiency. With the other available time, Outreach planned to cultivate sustainable relationships with key community Ambassadors. The goal is to achieve a 50/50 event execution to ambassador cultivation balance.

Other departments, thanks to the generosity of the Army National Guard Chief of Staff, State Public Affairs, Army National Guard recruiting and the Directorate of Information Management, absorbed the financial needs of Outreach. In 2009 Outreach spent about

\$11,000 on office supplies, printing, postage, and gifts for event attendees. This year, it is anticipated that Outreach will spend \$7,200.00 for about double the attendees.

A great deal of trial and error was needed to determine the best course of action for Outreach event calendars. An intranet calendar of events was created and on it we placed about 200 ONG outreach events. By the end of the year, we created a Google Outreach calendar and hosted it on the ONG website for public and organizational viewing. The intent is to inform the public about upcoming events and to create proactive opportunities to build event synergy between the two services.

The development of a database was time consuming and challenging. We evaluated a sophisticated contacts management database for purchase, and although we were unable to fund it, we learned about software capabilities and features. Instead, we built an excel spreadsheet and added past orientation flight passengers and 2009 event attendees to it. We also established a separate “On Deck” spreadsheet for other contacts to cultivate or invite to future events. Contact information fields, naming conventions, list organization, and potential database applications had to be considered and determined. By the end of the year, Outreach entered 1,200 contacts into the event attendance spreadsheet, placed an additional 350 contacts on the “On Deck” database and started the development of a more capable access database.

An Outreach communication plan was also created. Strategic messaging to both the internal and external audiences was developed.

Internal audience messages were:

1. Outreach activities influence readiness and support retention.
2. Educating and recognizing employers is an important part of balancing the three-legged-stool.
3. Outreach is a team sport. Outreach will treat you as our customer and work to earn your support.

These messages were delivered in multiple briefings, through articles in the ONG *Buckeye Guard* magazine, in committee meetings and via Army and Air intranet sites.

External strategic messages were:

1. We appreciate our employers.
2. We want members of key communities to be familiar with our missions and our people and become a part of our team.
3. There are many ways to support the Ohio National Guard.

These messages were delivered in person by command group general officers, the Ambassador Brochure, quarterly National Guard Notes postcards, event educational literature and media coverage. Approximately four media stories were produced this year, one by CNN.

***Goal 2: Educate employers about the ONG, recognize those that are supportive, and build awareness about how to find ONG military members to hire.***

Four unique “hands-on” joint employer quarterly events were executed throughout the state. Each wing partnered with an army brigade to create customized mission specific tours. Features of each event included a general officer overview brief (with their full participation throughout the day) a Chinook helicopter ride, a Meal-Ready-to-Eat (MRE) lunch, and other mission specific “hands-on” experiences. Ohio ESGR and Ohio AMVETS also gave presentations about their services and networked with guests. Seventy-one employers attended these events with 16 Soldiers/Airmen participating alongside them. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from employers and Servicemembers alike.

Several service specific employer events also were hosted. Two Army employer events were sponsored during annual trainings. Thirty-six employers participated, with 18 Soldiers. Outreach also helped facilitate a special leadership-focused trip to the Academy of Military Science for the Mansfield Young Professionals Organization. And, five ANG employers attended National Guard Bureau’s Business and Industry event at Volk Field Combat Readiness Center in Wisconsin.

At each event, every employer received a personalized certificate of appreciation signed by the Adjutant General. The presiding General Officer individually expressed his appreciation and presented this certificate to each employer in recognition of their support. Several ESGR Patriot Awards were also presented at these events.

Ohio was proud to be the recipient of two ESGR Freedom Award winners in 2009. NetJets and the Ohio Department of Public Safety were recognized nationally for their above and beyond support of Ohio National Guard members.

Patriotic Ohio National Guard Employer certificates signed by the Governor and the Adjutant General were distributed midway during Soldier deployments. The Adjutant General personally signed 235 certificates and individualized letters of appreciation last year.

Other promotional and educational products were distributed to event participants. Typically, event handouts included ONG wing or battalion fact sheets, the Ambassador Brochure, ESGR Statements of Support, Ohio AMVETS’ OHIO VETS CAN website brochure explaining how to find Servicemembers to hire, “Reasons to Hire Guardsmen” leaflet, the Family Readiness Family Assistance Center regional map with contact information and an event survey.

The Ambassador Brochure highlights ways for key community members to get further engaged with the ONG and explains that we offer 100% state college tuition in return for six years of service. We wanted every event attendee to receive this important recruiting message.

Outreach also designed and implemented the Employer Data Collection sheet to better facilitate the collection of employer data not available through the CEI database.

To further educate and engage employers, 970 employers were invited to call to duty, welcome home or 30-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events. General officers met personally with employers, thanking them for their support and providing the 1-800 Family Readiness phone number should they have future concerns about the well-being of their Servicemember. Outreach distributed Ambassador Brochures and took photos of Servicemembers with their employers. This memorabilia was framed and mailed with post-event correspondence, OHIO VETS CAN and Ohio Means Jobs hiring brochures. One hundred twenty eight employers attended 19 of these events.

Ohio Employer Support of Guard and Reserve remained a value partner as the Guard-specific employer outreach initiative was established. They shared Patriot Award data, Ombudsman case statistical data, funded meals at events, and participated in Outreach employer events. In 2009, the ONG presented 833 Patriot Awards and nominated 22 employers for the prestigious 2010 Freedom Award.

Outreach also strengthened their partnerships with Ohio AMVETS and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Both organizations publish job search websites that allow military-friendly employers to post job vacancies. They also help Servicemembers find jobs.

***Goal 3: Re-connect alumni to the ONG and create ways for them to demonstrate support.***

The reception of the Alumni Affairs program in its first year was outstanding. About 1,000 retirees or past members of the ONG registered in the alumni affairs database through the ONG website. From this database, 21 Alumni Affairs newsletters were distributed to about 3,000 people. This newsletter highlighted current ONG issues or events, changes in missions or command personnel, benefit information, alumni association happenings and the deaths of colleagues. Articles were also written in the ONG's quarterly magazine, *Buckeye Guard*. This new connection to the ONG was very welcome for many alumni who had lost touch with, or felt forgotten by, the organization.

The Alumni Affairs Coordinator represented the Adjutant General in several important capacities. He attended 60 alumni association events statewide and presented to at least 17. The Alumni Affairs Coordinator also facilitated the development of a new regional Association of the United States Army (AUSA) and participated in the Ohio Military Reserve commanding general selection panel.

Many retiree groups were briefed about the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (GRAP) and the potential financial benefits of serving as a Recruiter Assistant. About 500 retirees were briefed about the program and it was highlighted in the Summer 2009 Alumni Affairs column of the *Buckeye Guard*.

The first-ever ONG Alumni Reunion sponsored by the organization was well attended. Together with former ONG member and recently retired Congressman Hobson, the ONG command group thanked the 130 alumni attending for their past military service. Attendees were provided updates on missions and benefits and a tour of a current military construction site. We were particularly pleased with the more than expected attendance of retired Air National Guard alumni.

Alumni excitedly embraced the ONG Ambassador program, with 181 choosing to participate. The intent of this program is to identify supportive individuals who will speak positively on behalf of the organization and become further engaged.

Outreach also invited alumni (and other members of key communities) to participate in the Family Readiness Regional Inter-service Family Assistance Committee (RISFAC) meetings. RISFAC is for all military commanders, Family Readiness leaders, organizations and individuals who want to get involved in supporting troops and families. Through this forum, community members are able to personally meet military leaders, learn about the needs of troops and explore ways to meet them.

***Goal 4: Prioritize key communities to target and streamline organizational outreach activities.***

When the Outreach office was started, it was immediately clear that key community members to target had to be prioritized. The exhaustive key community list created by the Outreach Task Force was too broad and unmanageable. Employers and alumni would become the primary focus of outreach efforts, but educators, women, and minorities would remain important.

Other offices already were engaged with media, government officials, youth, and community service providers. Individual brigades or wings would continue to embrace community relations activities with these charitable, service or cause-based organizations as time permitted.

Outreach coordinated five annual orientation flights with other ONG offices. In collaboration with the Diversity Manager, Outreach hosted two flights: the woman and minority leader flights. Together with Army and Air Recruiting, Outreach facilitated the educator flight for high school centers of influence. Outreach also held a civic leader flight for Ohio school board members in partnership with the Ohio School Board Association. And, with State Public Affairs, a media flight was hosted. Consistent educational literature was distributed to 88 key community members participating in these flights.

At each Outreach event, “particularly interested” attendees were earmarked as Ambassadors. They were entered into the Ambassador section of the contacts database and added to the National Guard Notes post card mailing list. Altogether, 305 Ambassadors volunteered or were identified by Outreach staff. These especially

supportive people are the individuals with whom Outreach plans to build strong sustainable partnerships.

***Goal 5: Implement methods to build support for Family Readiness.***

The Ohio National Guard sets the standard for Family Readiness programs across the nation. Ohio has the most volunteers fully engaged in meeting the needs of Families, the richest supply of ongoing support services and its annual conference draws twice the attendees of any other state. Much of Family Readiness' success is due to effective community partnerships that had already been established.

Outreach hoped to bring value to Family Readiness by building additional community support. The first step was to better understand this broad program. The new Outreach Director had multiple meetings with the Family Readiness Director and members of his staff, attended the annual conference, Town Hall meetings, Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (ISFAC) and RISFAC meetings. Family Readiness also actively participants in the Outreach Working Group Inter-office Subcommittee described below.

Outreach worked to build community awareness about Family Readiness services. This was done by including reference information in the Ambassador Brochure, including Family Readiness information in briefings and informing contacts about Town Hall, ISFAC, and RISFAC meetings. And, Outreach shared information about Military Child Education Coalition training classes with the Ohio School Board Association.

***Goal 6: Initiate a process to build trusted relationships with internal stakeholders.***

As an important starting place, the Director of Community Outreach outlined staff expectations. These expectations focused mostly on team-building attributes such as professionalism, consistent follow-through, managing people's expectations, treating both internal and external contacts as customers, and always striving for the success of others and the common good.

Two other important entities were organized. The mission statement for both groups is to facilitate the cultivation and sustain Ohio National Guard Ambassadors by collaborating on key events, sharing contacts, and implementing effective follow-up techniques. The group also collaborated and agreed upon a charter that included a code of conduct.

The first committee is the Outreach Working Group comprised of major subordinate command personnel officers, wing executive support officers, and Employer Outreach and Alumni Affairs coordinators. The purposes of this group are to:

1. Promote effective outreach by developing trust, proactive communication, smooth event execution, and effective follow-up techniques.
2. Identify, cultivate, and sustain Ambassadors.



The other committee is the Outreach Working Group Inter-office Subcommittee comprised of Family Readiness, Diversity, Counterdrug, Army Recruiting, Employer Outreach, and Alumni Affairs. Purposes are to:

1. Effectively collaborate and shape ONG outreach success by sharing events, key community contact information and event follow up.
2. Identify, cultivate and sustain Ambassadors.

Prior to this, there were no opportunities to discuss outreach activities regularly across the organization. Until now, all community outreach activity had occurred in isolation.

***Goal 7: Initiate association outreach to cultivate partnerships and expand services.***

Five priority associations were identified based upon the needs of Servicemembers or their Families. The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP) could be instrumental in exploring strategies to increase the number of TRICARE providers. The Columbus Bar and Ohio State Bar Associations could be helpful in expanding the delivery of pro bono services. Because of their active military affairs committees, the Dayton and Toledo Area Chambers of Commerce could be helpful in building awareness about the ONG and reaching out to military-friendly employers.

Meetings were held with OAFP, the Columbus Bar Association and the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. Outreach and a senior-level ONG subject matter expert met with association leaders to explore common ground and itemize specific partnership strategies. Meeting outcome highlights include hosting an orientation flight for medical providers to educate them about TRICARE, speaking to the Ohio Coalition of Primary Care Providers about health issues affecting the military, chairing the Columbus Bar Association's military affairs committee, supporting a new attorney residency program and revitalizing the marketing of attorney pro bono services. The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce extended an invitation to the Ohio National Guard to sit on their Military Affairs Committee and to the Adjutant General to present at their upcoming Legislative Day.

Three other associations were also visited in 2009 because of previously cultivated relationships. They were the Ohio School Board Association (OSBA), Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Restaurant Association. Each association executive wanted to be more supportive and volunteered to have pertinent information published in their newsletters. The OSBA offered a complimentary display table at their annual conference where the OSBA Executive Director introduced the ONG Outreach Director to eight other education-related association leaders. Each of these leaders expressed interest in getting further engaged with the Ohio National Guard.

**Long Term goals:**

Accomplishing long-term Outreach goals seems promising. The administrative and event execution foundation is almost complete. With continued team building and diligence, we are hopeful that Outreach will be effective at retaining supportive employers and their Soldiers and Airman, developing mutually beneficial relationships with other members of

key communities, and advancing a proactive joint and synergistic organizational outreach paradigm that promotes the common good. The primary challenge will be to balance the number of events with the time needed to conduct follow- up techniques and build sustainable relationships.



Department of the Army Community Relations Awards Program of Excellence

**Program Category**  
**Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach**  
**Evaluation Phase**

Nominee: The Ohio National Guard Office of Community Outreach

Ohio National Guard Public Affairs: Office of Community Outreach

In its first year, the Office of Community Outreach met all of its current goals and most of the previously established goals.

The 2006 Employer Outreach Quality Improvement Board goals were either achieved or initiated. They included:

1. Educate employers about the Ohio National Guard.
2. Create a supportive relationship between employers, Guard members, and the Guard.
3. Resource the Employer Outreach program.

Outreach conducted four Army and Air National Guard outreach employer events, with a distinct “Guard” emphasis, independently of, yet in conjunction with, ESGR. The outreach program was resourced and a consistent educational approach was instituted. Processes were also initiated to help build supportive relationships between employers, Guard members and the Guard.

The foundation was also laid to meet the Adjutant General’s intent from the 2007 Outreach Task Force. This included:

1. Synchronize outreach activities, coordinate, and align efforts across the organization.
2. Implement follow-up techniques to build sustainable relationships.
3. Deliver consistent messages to customers.
4. Produce guiding documentation using the strategic planning process.

A vehicle for developing synchronization, coordination, and alignment across the organization was created with the development of the Outreach Working Group committees. The office of community outreach also initiated follow-up techniques to build sustainable relationships. Messaging was made more consistent by establishing

standard educational literature and promotional handouts. Guiding documentation will be produced when outreach working group committees concur that the Outreach processes seem to be working.

This innovative, one of a kind, Community Outreach program established in 2009 achieved its stated project goals. As was described in the previous section, all of the short-term goals were met and the foundation was laid for accomplishing its long-term goals. Participant surveys confirmed early program successes.

Employer survey feedback shaped the employer outreach program. Each survey was customized to the “hands on” experiences associated with the event. Significant results from 109 employer surveys include:

1. Every attendee felt the event helped them gain a better understanding about the Ohio National Guard, our missions, and how the support of our Families, Employers and Community is critical to mission success.
2. All but three attendees felt that the event facilitated a change in their level of understanding of the ONG from “very great” to the “greatest extent possible.”
3. Eighty percent rated the overall educational effectiveness of the event as “the greatest extent possible.” Twenty percent rated the overall educational effectiveness as “very great.” The majority rated the ONG overview briefing as one of the top three activities that provided the most value.
4. The majority also ranked the interaction with Servicemembers as the highest-ranking activity to provide value.
5. Thirty-eight percent chose to become Ambassadors. Given that the Ambassador program was in its infancy and Outreach provided minimal explanation about what this meant, this was a wonderful response. One could imply that this positive response reflected the enthusiasm, patriotism and/or support that the events inspired.

In response to survey feedback, Outreach had increased the participation of ONG members at the events. By the end of the year, about 38 Servicemembers had escorted their employers. Servicemember feedback on this program addition was obtained at the last event only. These six participants agreed that the employer outreach events furthered their employer’s understanding of the Guard and helped strengthen their relationship with them.

The Alumni Affairs Coordinator electronically surveyed 250 alumni to gauge the success of the program. Results indicate that alumni are extremely pleased with the program.

Survey results included:

1. Ninety-eight percent rate the newsletter as good or excellent
2. Ninety-six percent feel the newsletter meets their informational needs about the ONG
3. Ninety-four percent have a good to excellent impression of the program
4. Ninety-three percent rate the website as good to excellent

5. Alumni Reunion—60% no change, 24% add a social event the day/night before, 20% move it around the state
6. Ambassador program-64% familiar, 6% currently ambassadors, 39% were interested in becoming an Ambassador
7. Thirty percent were interested in serving on an Alumni Advisory Committee

Program improvement suggestions were also solicited. Recommendations included:

1. Highlighting current activities about colleagues in the newsletter.
2. Adding a social event and detailed briefings on topics suggested by alumni to the alumni reunion briefings.
3. Instituting an alumni advisory council to provide feedback and programmatic input for the Alumni Affairs program.
4. Continue to enhance the website with information about the Ambassador program, other topics of interest, and ways to link alumni to the ONG.

Overall, 305 Ambassadors volunteered or were chosen by the Outreach staff in 2009. Alumni comprised sixty percent of these Ambassadors.

Support of Army National Guard community relations outreach objectives was also evident. Beyond the impacts already described in other sections of this nomination, written employer survey feedback suggests that the community outreach program significantly contributes to Army community relations outreach objectives.

A representative sampling of this employer feedback includes:

1. “This was a great experience. You all make me proud to be an American and an Ohioan.”
2. “I gained a much better understanding of the Guard’s overall role in both our national and state security. I really had no clue before.”
3. “I have always looked at it as inconvenient to lose employees for 2-3 weeks at training; not any more! This was a great education.”
4. “This is an experience I will never forget. In the future I will worry less about the impact to us as a company and work harder to support my military associates.”
5. “This event opened my eyes to the level of training, focus and responsibility my employees receive.”
6. “Just being around Soldiers and Airmen showed me how much dedication they have for what they do.”
7. “I never knew so much about the Ohio National Guard until today. Everyone was well spoken and professional.”
8. “Improvised explosive device and HUMVEE training showed me how “cutting edge” the ONG is and how vital these training opportunities are for Soldiers. The overview was fantastically informative.”

Army recruiting efforts are indirectly supported when all the other Army community relations outreach objectives are being met. The Ohio National Guard’s innovative Community Outreach program directly inspires patriotism, fosters good community relations, increases public awareness, and maintains the Army’s respected reputation.

## Appendixes:

1. Sample of the Employer Outreach QIB Newsletter, April 2007 “Joint Employer Summary”
2. Community Outreach Task Force Action Plan, August 2008
3. Joint Employer Outreach Event Timeline
4. Employer Participation in Deployment and Reintegration Events Timeline
5. Soldier Employer Data Collection Sheet
6. Airman Employer Data Collection Sheet
7. Employer Post-Event Follow up Correspondence
8. Outreach Public Events Google Calendar on the Ohio National Guard Website
9. Ohio Army National Guard “TAGNET” Intranet Page
10. Ohio National Guard Community Outreach Community of Practice on the Air Force Portal
11. *Buckeye Guard* “More coordination, resources will help us better serve you.” Office of Community Outreach, Spring 2009
12. One page summary from October 2009 Army National Guard Commander’s Call, Community Outreach briefing
13. 2009 National Guard Notes Postcards, Numbers 1-4
14. CNN coverage: “‘Boss Lift’ Gives Civilian Employers a Taste of Military Mission.”
15. OHANG 179<sup>th</sup> AW Buckeye Airlifter newsletter article “Operation Joint Employer”
16. Employer Certificate of Appreciation
17. “How to Become an Ohio National Guard Ambassador” Brochure
18. Ohio American Veterans “OHIO VETS CAN” hiring brochure
19. “Reasons to Hire Guardsmen” handout
20. Adjutant General’s Employer Letter of Appreciation
21. Patriotic Ohio National Guard Employer Certificate
22. Community Outreach Office Event Summaries:
  - 13 Jun 2009 – *Operation North Coast*
  - 16 Jun 2009 – *Operation Joint Employer*
  - 11 Jul 2009 – *Operation Joint Employer*
  - 24 Aug 2009 – *Operation Buckeye Fiesta*
  - 17 Oct 2009 – *Rickenbacker Operation Joint Flight*
23. Sample Alumni Newsletter, December 11, 2009 issue
24. Ohio National Guard Alumni Reunion Event Summary
25. *Buckeye Guard* “As program takes shape, active alumni will make it a success. Alumni Affairs, Summer 2009
26. FY 09 Welcome Home, Call to Duty and Orientation Flight Summary
27. Outreach Working Group Charter
28. Joint Employer Event: Employer Survey
29. Joint Employer Event: Soldier/Airman Survey